Mein Kampf: A Dangerous Book That Demands Scholarly Attention

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> "He [the Jew] is and remains a complete parasite, a scrounger, like a harmful bacteria always spreading further, (…) His presence produces the effect of a parasitic plant: Wherever he [the Jew] settles, the people who welcome him will be wiped out eventually" (Hitler 304-5).

Historian Othmar Plockinger states that Hitler was famous for the newspaper coverage Hitler had when Hitler was in court defending his actions during the failed 1923 Munich Putsch. Because of this fame, book publishers were interested in publishing Hitler's story (*Ascent of Evil* 18:05-25). *Mein Kampf's* book release was heavily advertised in Germany's politically far-right press. But the book was a failure in sales only selling a few thousand copies to Nazi supporters (*Ascent of Evil* 19:40-20:05). The critics in the newspapers provide insight into how Germans received the confused political rambling in Hitler's book.

> "Hitler is a political agitator who no longer understands the world." *Nue Zurcher Zeitung*, 8 November 1925.
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> "His ideas come from a twisted mind." *Frankfurher Zeitung*, 11 November 1925.

"The public expected sensational revelations about the [Munich] putsch. The public hoped for Hitler to reveal insider secrets. In no way, was *Mein Kampf* any of this" (*Ascent of Evil* 20:40-21:00). *Mein Kampf* did not finally sell until the 1930 German election which brought attention to the Nazis. Fifty-four thousand copies were sold in 1930 alone. Historian Jean-Paul Bled states that people wanted to know what Hitler thinks now that he became part of the German political system (*Ascent of Evil* 22:00-22:35).

When *Mein Kampf* was published, it was a failure as a book because Hitler's ideas were so poorly received outside the small circle of Nazi faithful. *Mein Kampf* sales only improved after eight more years of Hitler's political tenacity made him a noticeable figure in Germany's fractures political scene; and only then, buyers of the book were interested in learning more about this political newcomer. While newspapers critics stopped publishing harsh critiques of *Mein Kampf* after the Nazi's 1930 political turn-out, it is worthy to note that prior to Hitler becoming Chancellor in 1933, praise for *Mein Kampf* also cannot be found in newspapers which were not far-right. This does not make *Mein Kampf* less dangerous and should in no way be used to interpret that *Mein Kampf* is less important than it is--- it is an important book. However, this can be evidence that *Mein Kampf* was always seen as incoherent, poorly though-out, and twisted by the majority of Germans from the very beginning. That said, it is historically accurate to also say that these Germans did not do enough to stop these ideas from leading their nation into peril.

Works Cited

Ascent of Evil: The Story of Mein Kampf. Directed and written by Frederic Monteil, narrated by Antoine David-Calvet, Java Films, 2016. Pallas Television, Paris.

Available on Amazon Prime, https://www.amazon.com/Ascent-Evil-Story-Mein-Kampf/dp/B073DQ1WG5; Apple TV+, https://tv.apple.com/us/movie/ascent-of-evil-the-story-of-mein-kampf/umc.cmc.30lsokxiuuyp4ur7ggcv1qf54; YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bImSGVYuvjI&t=2s.

Hitler, Adolf. *Mein Kampf.* Translated into French by Fernand Sorlot, Nouvelles Éditions Latines, 1934.